



**For immediate release
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DCR BEGINS LONG-TERM DESIGN AND INTERIM REPAIRS ON THE NORWOTTUCK RAIL TRAIL

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) have begun the design process for a full rehabilitation of the Norwottuck Rail Trail between Amherst and Northampton.

Funding for the \$600,000 design comes from a state and federal partnership among DCR, MassHighway, and the Federal Highway Administration. Funding for the eventual \$4 million reconstruction of the oldest sections of the 11-mile trail will come primarily from federal funds set aside by Congressman John Olver in a federal transportation bill, and state funds allocated by MassHighway. The design, by Stantec Consulting Services Inc., an international design firm with offices in Massachusetts, is expected to be completed in about a year.

“I am thrilled that the design of this project is underway,” said Congressman Olver, “and I hope that construction will begin shortly.”

In the meantime, DCR will begin making up to \$100,000 in interim spot repairs to the trail on May 19. These repairs involve removing root-damaged pavement, cutting out the offending roots, and resurfacing the trail in those areas. Warner Brothers Inc. of Sunderland will make the repairs along 2.6 miles of the trail in Hadley between the Route 9 rail trail tunnel and the Connecticut River bridge.

In addition, Stantec will be conducting soil borings for design work on the trail between Station Road and South East Street in Amherst. This site work will take place on weekdays and is expected to be complete in early June. The entire trail will be open on weekends during this period. On Memorial Day weekend, the trail will be open Friday-Monday, May 23-May 26. The trail will be closed section by section during the repairs as the contractor replaces each segment of pavement and soil borings are conducted.

The interim repairs are scheduled to begin after Bay state Bike Week, which runs May 10-May 18 and features many events along the trail in Northampton, Hadley, and Amherst. For details, visit www.pvbikeweek.com.

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“The Norwottuck Rail Trail is a unique linear park serving recreational riders as well as utilitarian trips and bike commuting” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “We’re thrilled to be fixing this popular facility.”

The longer-term reconstruction of the trail will include resurfacing the asphalt pavement and taking measures to address tree root damage; upgrading existing tunnels, bridges, and roadway crossings; fixing embankment issues in the Hop Brook area; and improving other landscape and trail amenities.

“Bicyclists depend on us to provide safe and well-designed transportation facilities,” said MassHighway Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky. “This project is one of many that demonstrate our commitment to a multi-modal transportation system.”

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.